

The Heart Beat

Serving the Roman Catholics of Custer and Powder River Counties

Volume 17 Issue I

Sacred Heart Parish + Miles City, Montana

Fall 2025

Inside this issue:

Meet our Seminarian-Luke	2
The Rescue Project	3
St. David's new addition	3
Sacred Heart School	4
Getting to know Mrs. Morris	5
Knights of Columbus PCCW	6
R&R	7
The Universal Call to Holiness	

PRAYER FOR THANKSGIVING

"Dear Lord, thank you for the blessings you've given us this year. We are thankful for family, friends, and this meal. Please help us to live with grateful hearts and to share your love with others. Amen."



HONESTY IS NOT THE BEST POLICY BUT CONVERSATIONS ARE HELPFUL—THOUGHTS ON RELATIONSHIPS

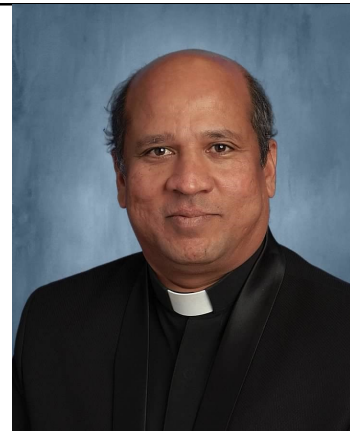
Coming from a priest, that title might sound strange—perhaps even ironic. After all, isn't honesty something we're supposed to uphold? Isn't it what we should promote in a world that has made dishonesty its home and renamed it "alternative facts"? I'm writing these reflections to explore the issue of honesty in relationships. Not because a clever idea struck me, but because, through experience, I've come to believe that under certain circumstances, honesty is *not* always the best policy.

Let me begin with my life learnings. I have been known to call a spade a spade and I use the past tense 'know' with a certain sense of responsibility. On hindsight I think I was very brash in the early years of my priesthood. I said what 'I wanted' to say rather than choose what needed to be said. Well. I did get a lot off my chest and I did feel I was being 'transparent' and not shady in my opinions. Diplomacy I thought was for diplomats, I was just expressing the need to say things as I saw them. I paid a price. You see, you may say this is not a matter of honesty but of discretion and yet I insist that brashness aside, the honest remarks made on several occasions did not go down well with even those groups I thought would.

Life is not as simple as we would like it to be. While we may feel that an honest sharing of 'everything' is essential; while I sense the need to be transparent one hundred percent, the consequences are not as often as a religious admonition on honesty may be. There is a price to pay whether you shoot your mouth off or honestly express an opinion or level up with what gnaws at your soul. Ironically, instead of the reward that honesty purports you might end up paying a nasty price for what you consider an honest opinion. Sometimes sugar coating serves a purpose.

Am I advocating dishonesty in a relationship? Well, for starters, not everyone can handle a good measure of honesty, after all you were given a consolation prize and made to believe you won something when in reality you lost the race. So, the system devised a dishonest, sugar-coated way of dealing with what should have been an honest situation and told you to go home empty handed. Sadly, we grow looking for consolation prizes and think that life served us lemons for that passionate desire we had to plant a lemon tree.

Relationships are fragile to say the least. Good doses of honesty in a relationship may work sometimes but don't work most of the while; what does work is conversation



and do that ever so gently. If you get into a relationship conversation like the way a bull goes into a pottery shop the result will find you picking up several pieces of very good pottery.

How then do you handle that which you really want to talk about? Begin by talking about 'the pot' don't be a bull; figure out for what purpose was it made, where was it made, figure out who made it and then decide where or how you want to use it. You get the analogy? We assume much in every relationship but the fragile nature of a relationship needs fragile handling and that comes about with conversations rather than doses of honesty.

Assume less, talk more! That's the mantra that every relationship needs to have. Conversations help you test the waters and while a particular conversation may not be apt for today it does not make it a conversation that can't be held on another day.

Fr. Jolly Pathiyamoola

Our Seminarian —Meet Luke!

I was born in Arkansas, but shortly after that my dad moved us to Oklahoma just before my sister was born. Sometime later, dad moved us back to Arkansas. Wherever dad found a better job or what might be a better opportunity for us, he got us there. I also remember my dad as being a man who, once he made up his mind, that was it. This quality, good or bad, I too see in myself. No amount of beginning or crying would ever change my dad's mind, unlike mom. When dad said no, he meant it. When he said we were going to do something, you could bet that we were going to do it. This too, I have instilled in my life, especially with my nephews and nieces.



But the most important trait I recall from my dad is his dedication to the church. Because he was a great chef, dad would often bake pies or cakes for church functions or volunteer to cook the big dinners at the Newman Center during Thanksgiving or Christmas. He also took up the less desirable hours for when the church had perpetual adoration. But the real evidence of my dad's faith came later in life, when he was fighting cancer before his death. Without fail, I remember coming home from the Navy and dad was still going to adoration weekly, sometimes driving 45-70 minutes to attend a Mass because work prevented him from going to the one close to home, or praying the rosary in the hospital those last days.

My dad set the bar high for me. But that's what Godly Men do. Jesus did not come to earth to kick back on a throne being praised and feed some of the best 4-star meals. Jesus also did not only come to die on the cross, but to also show us how to live. Following Christ, my dad taught me to set that bar high, and whenever that becomes too easy, it's time to set that bar higher. For what good would it be if the bar was set so low that we could crawl through the mud over the bar instead of soaring high above the clouds.

I know dads today are busy. Maybe he is working two jobs, keeping the cars in working order. Perhaps there's another project in the house or yard that needs fixing. And then there are those days when they somehow turn 24 hours into 40. Not to mention kids' games, school events, and the countless other surprises that come up with being a parent. Time and time again, real dads rise to the challenge. They answer the call, and somehow, they can make things happen.

And with that I offer you this challenge: Ask yourself with regards to your spiritual life, is the bar set too high, or is it too low? Did you participate in any of the Tuesday meetings like "Into the Breach"? Are you gathering with other men sharpening that iron with a Bible study? Have you been to a Friday adoration, be it 5 minutes or 5 hours? How about going to confession monthly, instead of the minimum of once a year? Maybe like going to the gym you need a buddy to get you started. Feel free to give me a shout, for as I have raised the bar for you, I welcome the same in return. For the world is full of weak men and could use more strong dads like St. Joseph the Terror of Demons.

Seminarian Luke

The Rescue Project

Beginning in January, The Rescue Project will once again be offered in our parish. This eight-week program which includes dinner, an episode and discussion will begin each Tuesday evening starting January 6th. This program has been popular and successful in our parish both times it has been offered.

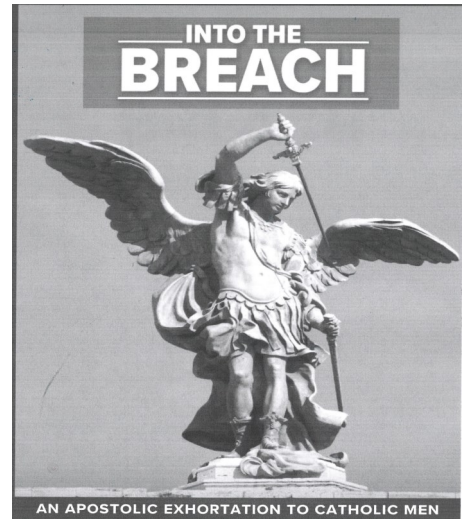
The Rescue Project seeks to proclaim the gospel in a compelling and attractive way using a small group format. Each table becomes a community in which they share their individual thoughts and perspectives while being presented with the story of our salvation in a way that challenges our modern world's story. The story that we are personally liberated, no longer connected to anything beyond our-

selves and free to do whatever we like. The story which sounds appealing but has left us in a state that we have never been so unhappy.

The Rescue Project proposes a simple question: What if there's a different story? What if there's a story which engages people to answer the deepest cries of the human heart? You are invited to come and journey with us to seek and find the answer to this story; to your story, to God's story for your life.

We are currently looking for people who wish to fill a table with their friends and companions and share in this journey. We are also looking for people who are seeking company to make this journey

with. We will provide the dinner, the babysitting and the episode. We need you to provide the community. For more information or to reserve your place talk to Deacon Tony.



St. David Addition to their church in Broadus, MT.



. The addition is going to enlarge the sacristy and include a handicap ramp to access the basement remodel of kitchen in the basement.

THE HEART BEAT

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Thank you to all who wrote articles, took photographs, or participated in any manner in the production and distribution of this issue. *The Heart Beat* is published four times a year. We invite your input, photos, and comments. The next issue is scheduled for April 10, 2025 and the deadline is April 24, 2025.



Jade Ballensky, 8th grade, is the team's libero — defensive specialist. Diving saves like this one helped the girls finish a perfect 15-0 season along with taking the 4C junior high championship.



This win marks the first time in the school's history that Sacred Heart has won a volleyball tournament.

When the last high school class graduated in 1986, girls' volleyball wasn't a thing. Sacred Heart started junior high VB a number of years back, but this is the first time we were able to take a championship — a milestone in Sacred Heart history.



Door Project Nears Completion

Replacing the doors in the gym area and main school building has been a project long in the works. Now, after many generous donations and planning, only a few doors remain to be installed. This summer, the main entry doors into the gym lobby (pictured above) were replaced along with the southern main building door. What remains to be done are the two gym doors and the back library door. The doors have been purchased, painted, and are just awaiting installation, which we hope will happen some time in November. Many generous donations - large and small - have helped cover the \$100,000+ cost.

Getting to Know Mrs. Morris

If you've ever walked past the first-grade classroom at Sacred Heart School, you've likely seen Mrs. Morris's warm smile and calm, caring spirit. This is her second-year teaching at Sacred Heart, and after visiting with her, it's easy to see how her faith, family, and love for children have shaped her life.

Mrs. Morris was born in Kansas City, Missouri, to Gayle and Gale Ferguson. When she was four, her family moved to Hood River, Oregon. The fifth of seven children, she grew up surrounded by three brothers and three sisters.

Over the years, Mrs. Morris has lived in many places—Utah, Arizona, Nevada, Idaho, Florida, Oregon, Missouri, and now Montana. The family's many moves were due to her husband Chris's career as a hydrologist with the federal government. The Morrises made Miles City their home in 2015.

Mrs. Morris earned her Bachelor of Science degree in Early Childhood and Elementary Education from Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah. Teaching and caring for children has always been close to her heart.

She and her husband Chris have six children, three sons and three daughters: Evan, Jacob, Justin, Anna, Ella, and Maggie. Their kids range in age from 19 to 28, and the family has now grown to include three daughters-in-law, one son-in-law, and four grandchildren—with another grandbaby on the way in March!

Mrs. Morris has worn many hats in life. Her first job in Oregon included picking strawberries, sorting pears, babysitting, and working at a movie theater. Her first teaching job was as a kindergarten teacher, and later she spent several years as a stay-at-home mom. Once their youngest child started school, she returned to teaching and substitute teaching.

She and Chris met at a church Christmas activity in 1994 after college and married the following year in Portland, Oregon. They are members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints here in Miles City, where Chris serves as Bishop.

Faith and service are at the heart of Mrs. Morris's life. She has led women's and children's church organizations, helped with music and Cub Scouts, and volunteered in schools whenever she could.

In college, she loved playing intramural volleyball and racquetball and was even on the frisbee team. These days, she enjoys crocheting, watching all kinds of sports, especially baseball, traveling, and experimenting with sourdough recipes. She's a proud Kansas City fan! Last summer, she and Chris enjoyed an Alaskan cruise. Thanks to her father, who was a pilot, she's also been able to travel to many parts of the world—including Italy and the Vatican, Germany, Amsterdam, Madrid, London, and Mexico.

When asked what's been the best part of her life, Mrs. Morris doesn't hesitate: marrying Chris and raising their family in faith. Now that their youngest daughter is off to cosmetology school in Idaho, the Morrises are enjoying their new chapter as empty nesters.

Mrs. Morris says her mother has been the most influential person in her life. Her favorite scripture, from the Doctrine and Covenants, is a verse that guides her daily:

"I, the Lord, am bound when ye do what I say; but when ye do not what I say, ye have no promise."

It's been a joy to get to know Mrs. Morris better. After having my grandson in her class last year, I already knew she was a special teacher—but visiting with her confirmed it even more. Thank you, Mrs. Morris, for sharing your story, your faith, and your gifts with our Sacred Heart School community!

Interviewed and picture taken

by Charity Aguirre





KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS

LOCAL KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS SUPPORT RIGHT TO LIFE

The Knights of Columbus actively promote Right to Life initiatives. Recently, we installed a new Right to Life sign on Interstate 94 near mile marker 146, heading toward Terry, replacing the original damaged by the elements.

This fall, Council 1518 was also a major supporter of the Outreach Clinic fundraising banquet.

In addition, the Council continues to back local projects, including lighting Calvary Cemetery, maintaining the memorial on Leighton Blvd., and participating in this year's *Coats for Kids* program.

Join us at our monthly breakfast. Your support helps fund these important efforts!

By Steve Muggli



Saturday and Sunday the K of C had a "Coats for Kids Drive", we give away new coats for any kids that need them. It was very successful.

We gave away 51 coats. We still have some left over, if an kids need a coat call Gene Bankey at 853-2702.



parish council of catholic women

The crisp fall air is here—cool, refreshing, and perfect for cozy projects!

Each year, the women of our parish pour their creativity and heart into the Red Scarf Program, crocheting, knitting, and sewing beautiful scarves for youth in Montana's foster care program. Scarves should be reddish in color (any shade), with gender-neutral designs, and measure at least 60" long and 5-8" wide—perfect for wrapping up warm. Other colors can be included, and whether handcrafted or purchased, there's still time to join this wonderful effort!

Mark your calendars: our Advent Social is set for **December 6th**. Plans are underway, so keep an eye on the church bulletin for details. It's always a joyful gathering, a chance to connect and celebrate with fellow parish women.

We warmly invite all women of the parish to join one of our circles and get involved:

- **St. Bernadette Circle** – Linda Simonsen, 406-853-3326
- **St. Gerard Circle** – Dori South, 406-853-4035
- **St. Therese Circle** – Sheila Christopherson, 406-234-3004 or Shannon Smith, 406-234-9366

Wishing everyone a Blessed Thanksgiving and a joyful Christmas season!

Vikki Taylor

President, Parish Council of Catholic Women



ROOT BEER AND RESURRECTION

Root Beer and Resurrection has been amazing! This year, we've had around 30 students in grades 8–12 joining us. Our focus is on holiness and striving to become saintly, and the students are eager to learn about and celebrate the Saints.

Each year, our leadership team grows and adapts to better serve the students and their needs. It's easy to stay motivated with students who never want to miss a Wednesday! They love being together, and we continue to build community across all five grades, reflecting the "universal" Church. Together we're learning that community helps us grow, support one another, and draw closer to Mass, Adoration, and Christ.

Last year, through evangelization, R&R helped two high school students enter the Catholic faith through OCIA. This year, three students are currently preparing for baptism and the sacraments with Fr. Jolly. How good is our God! Truly, this is a wonderful time to be Catholic! Hearts are seeking Truth and Tradition.

One of the greatest gifts for our leadership team is seeing students courageous enough to attend Mass without their families, choosing to grow in their faith on their own. Please continue to pray for our youth.

By Marissa Morford



THE UNIVERSAL CALL TO HOLINESS

The universal call to holiness is rooted in scripture, particularly in Matthew 5:48, Where Jesus instructs "So be perfect, just as your heavenly father is perfect. This call is not limited to clergy or religious but extends to all members of the Church, The Second Vatican Council's *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (Lumen Gentium)* affirms that all the baptized are called to the fullness of Christian life and the perfection of charity. This document emphasizes that every baptized person is called to the fullness of Christian life and the perfection of charity. As St. Paul tells as in his letter to the Christians in Ephesus, God "chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him" (Eph 1:4) The Church

teaches that holiness involves a personal relationship with God, characterized by prayer, the sacraments, and a commitment to living out the virtues exemplified by Jesus Christ. The call to holiness requires active participation in the life of the church and a commitment to personal spiritual growth. This includes engaging in prayer, participating in the Sacraments, and striving to live according to the teachings of Christ. The Church encourages the faithful to seek holiness through acts of service, love and mercy towards others, reflecting God's grace in their lives. The Lord Jesus, the divine Teacher and Model of all perfection, preached holiness of life to each one of His disciples of every condition. He Himself stands as the author and consummator of this holiness of life: "So

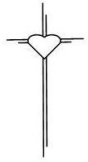
be perfect, even as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Mat. 5: 48). The followers of Christ are called by God, not because of their works, but according to His own purpose and grace. They are justified in the Lord Jesus, because in the baptism of faith they truly become sons of God and sharers in the divine nature (2 Peter 1:4). In this way they are really made holy. The universal call to holiness a vital aspect of catholic teaching that invites all believers to pursue a life of holiness, characterized by, love, service and a deep relationship with God. It emphasizes that holiness is not just a lofty ideal but a practical goal that can be achieved through grace and the daily choices of every Christian.

By Sister Lissy

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

- * **Thanksgiving Day Dinner** sponsored by the Thursday Cum Christo group will held Thursday, November 27th.
- * **Parish Council of Catholic Women Advent Social:** Saturday, December 6th, at 10am in the Riley Center. All women of Sacred Heart Parish and St. David are invited.
- * **Box Day** is scheduled for Saturday, January 10th, 2026





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